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Summary of informal interactive hearings of the General Assembly with representatives of non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations and the private sector

Note by the President of the General Assembly

The President of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly has the honour, in accordance with paragraph 11 of General Assembly resolution 60/227 of 23 December 2005, to transmit herewith the summary of the informal interactive hearings of the General Assembly with representatives of non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations and the private sector, held on 12 July 2006 at United Nations Headquarters.

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I. Introduction

1. The informal interactive hearings of the General Assembly with representatives of non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations and the private sector were held on 12 July 2006, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/227 of 23 December 2005.

2. The hearings were organized by the President of the General Assembly in consultation with Member States and representatives of non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, civil society organizations and the private sector. The hearings were part of the preparatory process for the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development to be held during the sixty-first session of the General Assembly on 14-15 September 2006 in New York.

3. The President of the General Assembly established a task force composed of representatives of non-governmental organizations, civil society networks and the private sector to advise him on the preparation of the hearings.

4. The hearings were attended by Member States and observers, representatives of non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, civil society organizations and the private sector. About 240 representatives of non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, civil society organizations and the private sector participated in the hearings; 94 Member States also attended.

5. The hearings were divided into three topics: (a) promoting a comprehensive rights-based approach to international migration, and ensuring respect for and protection of the human rights of all migrants and their families; (b) international migration and development: challenges for social and economic policies in sending and receiving countries; and (c) policy responses: promoting the building of partnerships and capacity-building and the sharing of best practices at all levels, including the bilateral and regional levels, for the benefit of countries and migrants alike.

6. The hearings were opened by the Acting President of the General Assembly. His statement was followed by the statements made by the Deputy Secretary-General and Peter Sutherland, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on International Migration and Development. The programme of the hearings is annexed.

7. The hearings constituted the first opportunity for Member States, within the framework of the General Assembly, to interact with representatives of civil society and the private sector in a discussion of the challenges and opportunities that international migration has brought to development.

II. Key findings

8. **The hearings demonstrated the strong commitment of Member States, observers, non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations and the private sector to collaborate in making the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development a success. There was a widely held view that international migration, development and human rights were**

intrinsically interconnected and that the High-level Dialogue presented a unique opportunity to make progress in maximizing the benefits of international migration, while addressing the challenges it posed and taking measures to reduce its negative impacts.

9. Participants emphasized the need for a rights-based approach in addressing the interrelations between international migration and development. Respect for the human rights of all migrants, regardless of status, was viewed as the cornerstone of any policy related to the international movement of people. Explicit consideration of human rights issues was viewed as crucial with respect to international migration movements, especially to reduce the vulnerability of certain groups of migrants, such as children, youth, women, indigenous peoples and migrants in irregular situations. Respect and protection of human rights were also seen as essential to promote the successful integration of migrants in the receiving countries and to ensure the best possible outcomes of labour migration. A rights-based approach implied the recognition of the full dignity of migrants and of their fundamental contribution to countries of origin and destination.

10. The hearings underscored that Governments, non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations, including migrant organizations, and the private sector all had a role to play in protecting the rights of migrants and in ensuring that international migration had a positive impact on development. Member States were urged to ratify all the core human rights instruments and, in particular, the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. They were also enjoined to become parties to relevant International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions, particularly No. 97 on migration for employment and No. 143 on migrant workers. Countries that were already parties to relevant human rights instruments were urged to ensure their full implementation.

11. It was thought important to make better use and build upon the work of the human rights machinery of the United Nations to prevent or redress violations of the rights of migrants. Particular mention was made of the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants, the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the Committee on the Rights of the Child. Realization of the international commitments embodied in the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and the ILO Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration that followed it, as well as in the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action of the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, were also thought to be crucial in ensuring the benefits of international migration.

12. The positive impact of international migration was underscored, noting that migration could contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals when supported by coordinated policies and cooperation among countries of destination, countries of origin and countries of transit. The migrants

themselves, by creating social ties and transnational networks, were recognized as central agents in this process.

13. The importance of remittances was recognized and participants called for greater efforts to maximize their development potential. Policy measures should include ways and means to facilitate the flow of remittances and enhance the capacity of migrants to save and pursue productive investment. To that end, it was necessary to extend the reach of financial institutions in developing countries, including those focusing on microfinance, and to take appropriate measures to minimize the high costs of transferring remittances. Measures to support or promote entrepreneurship, especially among young people, in countries of origin were thought useful. Participants underscored that remittances were private money and should not be viewed as a substitute for official development assistance.

14. Noting that women and girls accounted for about half of all international migrants today, emphasis was placed on the need for a gender-sensitive approach in formulating international migration policies and addressing the linkages between international migration and development. Participants underscored that policies and other measures should aim at empowering female migrants and increasing their contribution to the development of countries of origin and destination. It was noted, however, that in many circumstances, female migrants were more vulnerable to exploitation and abuse than male migrants, and it was important to take effective measures to protect them. In this regard, women who were victims of trafficking were in particular need of protection and assistance that should not be conditional on their participation in the prosecution of traffickers. Migrant women who engaged in domestic service were also singled out as a group in particular need of protection.

15. It was also felt that the social consequences of international migration deserved more attention. In this respect, the prospects of migrant children and young persons in the country of destination were of particular concern. The impact of separation on families and children resulting from migration also deserved more attention, as did the changes of family structures induced by migration in societies with high rates of emigration. The integration of migrants in the receiving countries was considered a fundamental issue involving the responsibility of all parties. Successful integration facilitated the positive contribution that migrants could make to the development of their own countries. The integration of young people in countries of destination, including via access to education, health care and information about disease prevention, would increase their positive contributions to receiving societies.

16. The hearings addressed issues related to the emigration of highly skilled workers from developing countries. It was observed that, especially in low-income countries, the loss of highly skilled workers, especially those in the health and education sectors, had decreased the quality of those services. In some cases, the emigration of skilled personnel was eroding the human capital of countries of origin, with potentially dire consequences for their long-term stability and sustainable development. The return of highly skilled migrants was regarded as very desirable, since it could contribute to the economic dynamism and development of countries of origin.

17. The hearings highlighted the contributions of transnational communities, that is, communities established in two countries and linked by migration to the development of communities of origin. The High-level Dialogue was viewed as an important opportunity to recognize and underscore the different ways in which transnational communities could enhance the development prospects of countries of origin.

18. The need for policies and programmes to promote reintegration for returning migrants and to facilitate the use of the skills that migrants acquired abroad was underscored. To promote return, countries of origin were encouraged to facilitate investment and the creation of small businesses. Improved understanding of the various ways in which skilled migrants could contribute to the development of their countries of origin could help in formulating appropriate policies to encourage and facilitate their return.

19. It was noted that countries of origin and relevant partners should work together to provide opportunities for all citizens to achieve sustainable livelihoods. Access to more and decent jobs would make migration a voluntary option, not a necessity.

20. The participation of migrants in trade unions and migrant organizations and collaboration with the private sector were identified as crucial to all aspects of labour migration. The importance of a social dialogue to ensure citizen support for migration policies and a better reflection of the views of all stakeholders on policy development were underscored. Governments were encouraged to cooperate with the private sector and civil society to improve the situation of migrant workers and their families and to foster a more positive perception of the contributions that migrants made to the host society.

21. There was widespread agreement on the need for a better understanding of the relationship between international migration, development and human rights. The importance of more timely and accurate data about migrant flows and more detailed information on the characteristics of international migrants, including their age, sex, level of educational attainment and occupation, was underscored. It was recognized that sufficient funding had to be allocated to build technical infrastructure and develop the appropriate expertise. Capacity-building initiatives supported by intergovernmental cooperation, including South-South cooperation, were welcomed.

22. Participants felt that any future consultations on the issue of international migration and development should include the effective participation of migrants themselves, non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations and the private sector. Several participants pointed out, in describing the operation of the consultative forum proposed by the Secretary-General, that it was stated in his report[1] that civil society would participate when Member States deemed it "desirable and appropriate". Participants stressed that the forum should include the participation of all stakeholders and thus benefit from the expertise and experience that civil society and the private sector could bring to a discussion of international migration and development.

[1] A/60/871.

III. Interactive segment on promoting a comprehensive rights-based approach to international migration, and ensuring respect for and protection of the human rights of all migrants and their families

A. Promoting a rights-based approach to international migration

23. Participants underscored the need to ensure the protection, promotion and fulfilment of the human rights of all migrants, in particular the right to decent work, that is, work that would provide sufficient remuneration and acceptable working conditions. It was argued that in some cases individuals were compelled to migrate because their human rights were curtailed or violated in their countries of origin. The universal respect and protection of human rights would make migration truly voluntary and could reduce the incidence of irregular migration. Mention was made of the seven core human rights instruments, which included the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. The other six instruments established the rights of all persons and hence applied also to international migrants. Most countries had ratified at least one of those instruments and were therefore legally bound to apply them.

24. Participants stressed that the human rights machinery of the United Nations had an important role to play in ensuring that the rights of migrants were respected. Participants mentioned, in particular, the important role played by the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants and of the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. Some participants suggested that these mechanisms for redress should be strengthened. Also mentioned were the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Committee on the Rights of the Child, which oversaw the implementation of human rights instruments that applied to all persons, including international migrants. Participants further stressed that the international commitments embodied in the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and the ILO Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration, which followed it, as well as in the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action of the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance needed to be fulfilled.

25. Participants thought, in reviewing the linkages between international migration and development, that consideration of human rights was necessary. Some participants felt that the report of the Secretary-General should have placed stronger emphasis on human rights. A related concern was that temporary labour migration programmes typically curtailed the rights of migrants and were therefore far from ideal as a legal channel for labour migration. Similarly, the movement of natural persons under mode 4 of the General Agreement on Trade in Services was discussed in terms of trade without due regard to the human rights dimension. It was emphasized that respecting the human rights of all migrant workers, especially those rights related to employment and the right to form or join trade unions, was beneficial for all. Without such protections, the conditions of work of both migrants and local workers were likely to be undermined.

B. Gender

26. While recognizing that migrant women had much to contribute to their countries of destination and origin, participants stressed that women who migrated were more likely than those who did not to fall prey to exploitation or abuse, particularly sexual abuse and gender-based violence. Participants therefore called on Governments to ensure that policies and regulations supported the empowerment of migrant women and that special attention be given to specific measures to protect them from abuse. The importance of ratifying and implementing the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was stressed, recognizing that the low status of women in certain countries was a root cause of international migration and that the status of female migrants was closely related to that of all women in countries of destination and origin.

C. Participation of civil society

27. Participants emphasized that non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations, including migrant organizations and trade unions, and the private sector were all key actors in the development process and indispensable partners in ensuring that the benefits of international migration for development might be realized. Their contributions, perspectives and experience would therefore be an important input for the High-level Dialogue and would have to be taken into account in any follow-up to it.

D. Consultative forum on international migration and development

28. In his report on international migration and development, the Secretary-General recommended the creation of a consultative forum in which Member States could discuss international migration and development issues with a view to exchanging information, identifying best practices and forging partnerships for cooperation. Participants expressed their support for a follow-up to the High-level Dialogue and considered that the proposed consultative forum had merit. They suggested that the proposed forum should also include the participation of non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations, including migrant organizations and trade unions, and the private sector. It was felt that opening the forum to the participation of all stakeholders would strengthen it by ensuring that a wider range of experience was taken into account. Wider participation might also permit the forum to build linkages with the non-State actors most interested in moving forward with any novel ideas or initiatives that the forum might help shape. Participants added that, to assure that the forum approached migration issues in a comprehensive way, it should welcome the participation of all organizations whose activities were relevant to migration, not just the entities belonging to the Global Migration Group.

E. Ratification of United Nations human rights instruments

29. Participants expressed concern that relatively few Member States had ratified the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. Several participants urged Member States to ratify

the Convention and other core human rights instruments and to implement them. Some participants noted that the Secretary-General's report on international migration and development did not contain an explicit call for the ratification of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. They recalled at the same time that the Secretary-General had urged the ratification of this and other instruments on several occasions and welcomed the special treaty event planned to coincide with the High-level Dialogue. The treaty event would promote ratification of all international instruments relative to "crossing borders", including the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

IV. Interactive segment on international migration and development: challenges for social and economic policies in sending and receiving countries

A. Root causes of international migration

30. It was noted that asymmetries between countries in terms of levels of development and labour market needs were a root cause of international migration. Participants also pointed out that globalization and improved communication technologies, which had resulted in stronger business and cultural linkages among countries, had led to increased international mobility. Demographic trends and especially differences between countries in terms of age structures were identified as an additional factor leading to migration. In addition, some people, particularly the highly skilled, migrated to take advantage of greater training opportunities abroad. To ensure that international migration resulted from voluntary choices, participants urged all countries to create conditions that would permit all citizens to forge sustainable livelihoods. It was recognized that the failure of many developing countries to generate sufficient and decent jobs was an important cause of international migration. Although international migration could contribute to palliate the negative consequences of deficient job creation, participants stressed that it should not be considered as a strategy to promote development.

B. Linkages between migration and development

1. Economic impact of migration at the global level

31. The positive impact of migration was underscored by several participants who noted that international migration could contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals, provided it was guided by policies based on a human rights approach and on cooperation between countries of destination, countries of origin and countries of transit. It was argued, however, that international migration should not be viewed as a long-term development strategy.

2. Impact of remittances, reducing remittance transfer costs and leveraging remittances

32. A number of participants underscored the importance of remittances and called for greater efforts to maximize their development potential, stressing that remittances were private transfers that benefited primarily the families that received them. It was observed that in some countries, the cost of remitting money exceeded 20 per cent of the total amount transferred. Therefore, there was an urgent need to lower these transfer costs since such reductions could contribute significantly to increasing the funds that actually reached the families of migrants. It was recognized that countries of origin could take proactive action to enhance the development impact of migrants' contributions and savings, particularly by collaborating with the private sector to widen access by migrants and their families to financial institutions, including microcredit institutions. These institutions could, in turn, provide an array of financial services, including savings accounts and loans. Civil society organizations could also play an important role by, for example, promoting financial literacy among migrant families and providing advice and support for entrepreneurship. Access to such support was a means of leveraging the benefits of remittances for development. Participants stressed that in no case should remittances be considered a substitute for official development assistance.

3. Highly skilled migration

33. Participants underscored the importance of finding ways of minimizing the negative consequences of highly skilled migration from developing countries, particularly low-income countries. Of special concern was the outflow of highly skilled workers in the health and education sectors whose departure compromised both the quantity and quality of services in the countries of origin. Insufficient Government funding for those sectors was recognized as contributing to the emigration of their highly skilled personnel.

34. Noting that, in the modern world, human capital was necessary for the achievement of sustained and sustainable development, participants underscored the importance of fostering the voluntary return of highly skilled migrants. It was acknowledged that countries of origin needed to provide an enabling environment so that returning migrants could use their skills to foster development. Countries of origin were urged to implement measures to retain the highly skilled by ensuring equitable pay and decent working conditions. Receiving countries were encouraged to cooperate with countries of origin by supporting human capital formation and ensuring that a sufficient number of workers were trained to replace the highly skilled who had migrated.

35. Countries were urged to adopt codes of conduct regarding the recruitment of highly skilled migrants so as to ensure that emigration did not aggravate the skill shortages in low-income countries.

4. Transnational communities

36. Participants acknowledged that transnational communities and networks could contribute to the development of both communities of residence and those of origin. It was suggested that the United Nations could be more proactive in engaging the support of transnational communities in fostering development. In particular, the High-level Dialogue could serve as a catalyst for the greater participation of

transnational communities in development activities. To that end, it was necessary to assess the effectiveness of different types of programmes and development projects that had involved transnational communities. Participants noted that the engagement of transnational communities with countries of origin could be facilitated by policies such as the recognition of dual citizenship or the granting of voting rights to citizens living abroad. It was also suggested that countries of origin and countries of destination could increase support to migrant-led transnational enterprises, thereby creating jobs in both countries of origin and countries of destination and promoting co-development.

5. Policies to promote a successful return

37. Participants considered that migrants who returned voluntarily to their countries could be agents of development, provided that policies in countries of origin facilitated the transfer of funds, access to loans and the setting up of small businesses. Governments were urged to cooperate with the private sector in establishing reintegration programmes for returning migrants that included finding employment opportunities for them. These programmes could foster entrepreneurship by assisting in the setting up of small businesses and providing either a share of the financing needed or facilitating the access of migrants to credit institutions.

38. Participants noted that international cooperation was necessary to address the challenges that involuntary migrant returns posed to the country of origin. Support for reintegration programmes was needed to minimize the negative consequences of such returns on the countries of origin and for the migrants themselves.

6. Coherence of policies on international migration and development

39. The need for greater coherence between international migration and development policies was underscored. Participants suggested that international migration should be part of poverty reduction strategies. There was a call for countries of origin to fully incorporate strategies for harnessing the benefits of international migration into development policies and to include consideration of international migration and its consequences in any bilateral negotiations on development cooperation involving countries of origin and destination.

40. A participant pointed out that there were many contradictions in the way countries dealt with international migration issues. For instance, while developed countries needed migrant workers, they were reluctant to regularize the status of large segments of the migrant population working in their territory.

41. To ensure that both policies and practice safeguarded the rights of migrants, it was suggested that Governments ought to regulate and monitor the activities of recruitment agencies. Establishing a mandatory code of conduct relating to recruitment and placement of workers abroad was considered a useful strategy in this regard. Recruitment agencies often provided guidance and basic training for migrant workers before they were posted abroad. The provision of training and information was felt to be useful, particularly if it presented a realistic view of the working conditions abroad and information on the rights and responsibilities of migrants in the receiving country. Participants agreed that Governments could do more to disseminate information about migration procedures and consular services

and to raise awareness about the risks involved in international migration, especially undertaken at the margins of the law.

C. The importance of a rights-based approach to international migration for development

1. Rights of migrants

42. Participants stressed that, in considering the interlinkages between international migration and development, it was important to make explicit that migrants were not commodities and that, as persons, they had intrinsic rights that States had the responsibility to respect, protect and promote. This perspective implied that the formulation of migration policies had to be underpinned by a people-centred approach that considered how best to safeguard the civil, political, economic, cultural and social rights of international migrants.

43. Some participants focused on those migrants who were denied equal protection under the law. Participants stressed the importance of providing migrants with legal recourse when they were unjustly treated or suffered injuries because of being constrained to work in dangerous conditions. Participants stressed that it was important for all migrants to have access to redress mechanisms and to have freedom of association since, without effective means of combating exploitative practices, not only the migrants themselves but also the host society would have to bear the negative consequences of those deplorable practices.

44. The importance of incorporating workers' rights into labour policies and trade agreements relating to international migrants, as well as that of including the right to organize and join trade unions in host countries, was underscored. Participants noted, in this regard, that temporary worker programmes often curtailed the rights of migrants and sundered families.

2. Vulnerable groups: migrant women, migrant children and indigenous peoples

Female migrants

45. Participants noted that female migrants, particularly those in an irregular situation and those engaged in certain occupations (e.g., domestic workers, entertainers, sex workers, etc.) tended to be more vulnerable than male migrants to exploitation by employers and others. In particular, women who were victims of trafficking required protection and assistance.

46. More generally, female migrants were often the subject of double discrimination, as foreigners in the host society and as women. Consequently, they were more likely than other women to experience discrimination in the workplace, barriers to decent employment, unequal pay for the work performed or violence inside the home. Despite these handicaps, migrant women were increasingly recognized as key players in ensuring the welfare of their families and important agents of development in their own right. These roles could be enhanced by a supporting policy and institutional environment that would promote the empowerment of female migrants. Key measures in this regard would include providing effective safeguards against discrimination and abuse, redress in case of

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the latter and support for the participation of migrant women in trade unions and community affairs.

Migrant children

47. Migrant children, especially those who crossed borders without being accompanied by adult relatives, constituted another vulnerable group. Participants urged Governments to devise policies to ensure that unaccompanied minors, especially those who entered a country without authorization or were victims of trafficking, were accorded appropriate assistance and protection, as well as support to be reunited with their families. It was suggested that a legal framework for the protection of unaccompanied children could be established.

48. With respect to migrant children living with their families, the main issue identified by participants was their socialization and integration into the host society, and ways to ensure that they had equal opportunities as other children with regard to access to education and basic services. It was felt that all children, regardless of their migrant status, should be entitled to free primary education.

49. Some participants observed that the separation of children from one or both parents as a result of migration could have detrimental effects on their social and emotional development. The greater access to material goods as a result of remittances did not always counterbalance the effects of long separations from parents. Some participants also pointed out that migration policies needed to take account of the impact of migration on family and societal structures.

Indigenous peoples

50. Some participants focused on the plight of indigenous peoples, particularly those forced to move from their ancestral lands by development projects, the exploitation of resources by private companies or conflict. This situation often deprived them of sustainable livelihoods and resulted in poverty, ultimately contributing to their internal displacement or to their migration abroad. International cooperation and engagement were needed to protect the communal rights of indigenous peoples to their ancestral domains. A participant called on countries of destination to acknowledge and respect the rights of indigenous people to maintain their customs and practices.

3. Young migrants

51. Participants noted that young people (aged 18 to 34 years) constituted the largest group of international migrants and were frequently the most dynamic group within migrant communities. Young people could therefore play a key role in linking transnational communities with countries of origin. Participants suggested that more could be done to use the expertise and dynamism of young people, especially those educated abroad and the second generation, to assist in the development of countries of origin. Governments of countries of origin might consider taking proactive steps to engage the younger generation of expatriates and explore ways of providing them with opportunities to work constructively with the society of origin.

52. It was noted that conducting information campaigns could facilitate the social and cultural integration of young migrants, as would ensuring their access to

education, health care and information about disease prevention. Some participants argued that, given the large number of young migrants, it would be advisable to involve them in the formulation of policies that concerned them.

4. Migrants in an irregular situation

53. Participants argued that restrictive migration policies contributed to increasing irregular migration. Also contributing to the upward trend in irregular migration were the cumbersome and lengthy renewal procedures involved in managing temporary labour migration. The fact that migrants in an irregular situation were more vulnerable to exploitation and abuse and usually did not have access to appropriate mechanisms of redress was stressed. Participants were concerned by policies that emphasized border protection and the apprehension, deportation or criminalization of irregular migrants. Participants noted that irregular migration responded to shortages of low-skilled workers in countries of destination. Under those circumstances, participants felt that policies to address irregular migration ought to take a holistic approach and that regularization programmes should be one of the policy tools considered. It was felt that access to basic public services, including health care and education, should be extended to all migrants regardless of status.

5. Integration of international migrants

54. Many participants identified integration and non-discrimination as key elements for ensuring that migrants made a positive contribution to countries of origin and destination. Participants noted that many host countries were dealing with the challenges posed by migrant integration. In this regard, Governments would benefit from maintaining an open dialogue with civil society organizations, including migrant associations and trade unions, and the private sector. Participants recognized that there was as yet no template to achieve successful integration and suggested that international dialogue could help identify best practices in this regard.

55. Participants observed that transnational communities were better able to contribute to the country of origin when they were well integrated into the host society. In this regard, a focus on younger migrants and the descendants of earlier waves of migrants was considered imperative. These groups represented the future for both the societies of origin and those of destination: in a few years they would be deciding whether to continue forging ties with the countries or communities of origin. It was therefore considered important for countries of origin to maintain and reinforce ties with young migrants and children of migrants.

D. Intergovernmental cooperation on international migration and the role of civil society

56. A number of participants acknowledged the need to foster international cooperation and several welcomed the proposal of the Secretary-General to establish an intergovernmental consultative forum. It was strongly suggested that the forum, if created, should make provisions for the active participation of representatives of non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations and the private sector.

57. One participant inquired whether the High-level Dialogue would examine ways to lower the transfer costs of remittances. It was suggested that financial institutions and banks should also participate in the High-level Dialogue.

58. The importance of regional and South-South cooperation was underscored. The need to remove impediments to South-South migration was also noted, and one participant remarked that it was sometimes easier to migrate from Africa to Europe than to migrate within Africa.

59. The role of civil society in building partnerships, implementing programmes, reporting on experience gained and discussing best practices was considered essential. Member States acknowledged the importance of civil society and related instances of consultations that Governments had had with civil society representatives in developing policies or programmes related to international migration.

60. The private sector was also acknowledged as playing a key role in shaping international migration policies. It was suggested that Governments call on the private sector to cooperate in improving the situation of migrant workers and their families. Representatives of the private sector reported that many businesses depended on migrant workers and that employers in the formal sector were committed to respecting the rights of migrant workers as established by law. Some representatives of private sector organizations noted that cumbersome regulations often hindered or impeded the legal hiring of migrant workers and therefore acted as a barrier for enhanced productivity. A representative of a private sector organization offered its services to assist in drafting model national legislation on international migration. A participant reported that the International Organization for Migration had established a business advisory board. A proposal for the development of a charter of corporate social responsibility to make more effective the engagement of the business sector in international migration issues was put forward. Such a charter would reaffirm the rights of migrant workers and call for them to receive equitable remuneration, retirement and social benefits, and generally equal treatment as that of local workers.

E. Improvement of the evidence base

61. Several participants highlighted the need for a better understanding of the interrelations between international migration, development and human rights. The importance of more timely and accurate data about international migrant flows and more detailed information on the characteristics of international migrants, including their age, sex, level of educational attainment and occupation, was underscored. Participants considered that such information was crucial for the formulation of migration policies.

62. Participants called for more empirical research on the interface between international migration, poverty and skills acquisition. Mention was also made of the need for in-depth studies on return migration and the efficacy of policies to promote the successful reintegration of return migrants and their contribution to development, particularly in the case of the highly skilled.

63. Participants noted that there was much that needed to be explored about the overall impact of international migration on development. In this regard, the United

Nations could take the lead in developing better methodologies to estimate the net effects of international migration on development for countries of origin and countries of destination. In particular, although advances had been made, a more comprehensive understanding of the effects of remittances on countries of origin was still necessary.

64. It was recognized that sufficient funding had to be allocated to build technical infrastructure and develop the appropriate expertise to carry out research both in countries of origin and countries of destination. Capacity-building initiatives supported by intergovernmental cooperation, including South-South cooperation, were thought to provide useful vehicles to enhance the evidence base.

V. Interactive segment on policy responses: promoting the building of partnerships and capacity-building and the sharing of best practices at all levels, including the bilateral and regional levels, for the benefit of countries and migrants alike

A. Improved cooperation: the role of major stakeholders

1. Non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations and the private sector

65. Participants underscored the importance of the participation of non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations and the private sector in the High-level Dialogue to ensure that a variety of voices was heard and taken into account. Governments were encouraged to cooperate with the various migration stakeholders, including non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations, including migrant organizations and trade unions, and the private sector. Participants provided examples of countries where policy formulation included the active participation of civil society and the private sector. Examples were drawn from both developed and developing countries. Civil society was also key in advancing the understanding and awareness of the linkages between international migration and development.

66. Several participants underscored the importance of involving the private sector. Examples of useful cooperation between the private sector and authorities at various levels of government (national, regional or local) related to measures to facilitate the transfer of remittances, reduce transfer costs and, perhaps more importantly, to foster the productive use of migrants' savings. While recognizing that the primary responsibility for formulating and implementing international migration policy rested with Governments, participants supported the creation of partnerships between Governments, the business sector and civil society organizations, including trade unions, to help shape policy on migration and development and to ensure the effective implementation of international migration policy.

67. Participants called for greater cooperation between Governments and migrant associations. It was suggested that Governments could involve migrant associations in monitoring the costs of remittance transfers and working towards lowering them.

Migrant communities could work with Governments in countries of origin to support improved governance and institutions. Participants agreed that the involvement of transnational communities in fostering the development of countries of origin was both desirable and essential to maximize the benefits of international migration. It was acknowledged that the establishment of knowledge-sharing networks involving members of migrant communities could benefit countries of origin.

2. Involvement of particular groups of stakeholders

68. In enhancing partnerships involving civil society, participants felt that adequate representation of key groups, including young migrants, migrant women and migrants from indigenous groups was important. The special interests of children should also be represented. All relevant stakeholders should have a role, regardless of legal status.

3. Involving host societies

69. It was felt that partnerships would not be effective without the involvement of representatives of host societies. Civil society organizations could play a role in improving public perceptions about international migration in receiving countries. In particular, they should be active in information campaigns to raise awareness about the positive contribution that international migrants made to host societies. The importance of combating racism and xenophobia in receiving countries was stressed, together with the need to promote mutual understanding and tolerance among host societies and migrant communities. Participants thought that surveys monitoring public perceptions were useful tools.

4. Research community

70. Participants recognized that timely, accurate, reliable and easily accessible data and other information were prerequisites for the successful formulation of migration policies and programmes. The research community played a crucial role in promoting better understanding of the nexus between international migration and development. It was suggested that partnerships between researchers and Governments were important to ensure that research findings reached and were properly understood by decision-makers. Such partnerships also helped to ensure that research focused on relevant policy issues.

71. Given the relevance of regional consultative processes in building partnerships among Governments, it was suggested that stronger linkages between those processes and researchers could be beneficial.

B. Intergovernmental cooperation

1. Cooperation among Governments

72. Participants underscored the importance of promoting partnerships, capacity-building and the sharing of best practices at the bilateral level for the benefit of countries of origin and destination and migrants alike. Participants also noted the importance of bilateral agreements with regard to international migration, particularly between neighbouring countries. It was stressed that bilateral

agreements on migration should incorporate a rights-based approach. A participant called for the development of a depository system for bilateral agreements that would make them easily accessible, as suggested in the report of the Secretary-General. Such agreements could constitute a "true path for development" by contributing to link transnational communities with countries of origin, especially by promoting the exchange of knowledge and skills.

73. Some participants endorsed the concept of co-development as set forth in the report of the Secretary-General, indicating that close cooperation between countries of origin and destination could contribute to maximizing the benefits of international migration, while minimizing its negative consequences. Some participants recommended that co-development incorporate a rights-based approach. It was important for Governments to have mechanisms to assess the effectiveness of policies and programmes and to share best practices so that avoidable policy shortcomings would not be repeated. Governments might benefit from sharing experience regarding strategies to promote integration and to combat racism and discrimination. Participants recommended that technical cooperation between countries of origin and destination be pursued.

74. Cooperation among Governments was also viewed as crucial in combating trafficking in persons. The ratification and implementation of United Nations instruments regarding trafficking in persons was a first step in that direction. Participants urged Governments to protect the victims of trafficking in persons, especially by granting them permission to stay and safeguarding their human rights. Some participants argued that restrictive migration policies were at the root of increased trafficking. Additional measures to combat human trafficking should include the monitoring of recruitment practices and those to protect the rights of women and migrant workers.

2. High-level Dialogue and its follow-up

75. Participants recommended that the High-level Dialogue be transparent and inclusive. Several participants expressed support for the Secretary-General's proposal to establish a consultative forum at the global level to focus on international migration and development issues. To be effective, the forum would have to make possible the full participation of representatives of non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations and the private sector. In particular, the consultative forum should engage representatives of trade unions, migrant associations and networks, as well as youth organizations, so that Governments could obtain a balanced view of migration's benefits and challenges.

76. The positive impact of international migration, based on firm respect for human rights, was underscored by several participants, especially those who noted that it could contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals. There was general agreement that improved cooperation among Governments and with non-State actors that included a wide spectrum of civil society organizations and the private sector could go a long way in promoting the beneficial aspects of migration. Fostering partnerships among Governments as well as among Governments and other stakeholders was necessary to protect migrants, ensure respect for their rights and foster the benefits of international migration for development.

Annex

Programme of the informal interactive hearings of the General Assembly with representatives of non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations and the private sector

10 a.m.-1 p.m.	**Morning meeting**	
10 a.m.-10.30 a.m.	Opening of the hearings	
	Statement by the Acting President of the General Assembly	
	Statement by the Deputy Secretary-General	
	Statement by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on International Migration and Development	
10.35 a.m.-11.45 a.m.	Segment 1	Promoting a comprehensive rights-based approach to international migration, and ensuring respect for and protection of the human rights of all migrants and their families
11.50 a.m.-1 p.m.	Segment 2	International migration and development: challenges for social and economic policies in sending and receiving countries
3 p.m.-6 p.m.	**Afternoon meeting**	
3 p.m.-4.15 p.m.	Segment 3	International migration and development: challenges for social and economic policies in sending and receiving countries (continued)
4.20 p.m.-5.30 p.m.	Segment 4	Policy responses: promoting the building of partnerships and capacity-building and the sharing of best practices at all levels, including the bilateral and regional levels, for the benefit of countries and migrants alike
5.30 p.m.-6 p.m.	Closing of the hearings	
	Statement by the Acting President of the General Assembly	